

(1907, p. 192) that large collections in Natural History have been made by the Duke Adolf Frederick of Mecklenburg in Karagweh, on the western side of Lake Victoria, and are expected to arrive shortly in Berlin. The Duke proposes to proceed to Lake Kivu, and subsequently to visit Lake Albert and the Ruwenzori Mountains. The zoologist of the expedition is Dr. Schubetz.

Rennell Island, Western Pacific.—In reply to a request for a specimen of *Woodfordia supeciliosa**, to be figured in 'The Ibis,' Mr. Woodford (Government Residence, Tulagi, Solomon Islands, Aug. 19th, 1907) writes to Sclater that he sees no possible chance of obtaining another example. "Rennell is an island about 70 miles outside the Solomon group, and very difficult to get at, as it is almost impossible to find an anchorage there. I managed to hang on a few hours in fine weather, on the south side, and am one of the first white men who have ever landed on it. I did not like to do any shooting there for fear of frightening the natives, who are a most unsophisticated community, pure Polynesians, not Melanesians, still in the 'hoop-iron' age. During my visit, besides the bird, I got a new orchid, which has been described at Kew as *Saccolabium woodfordi*. I noticed a Black-necked Ibis breeding on Rennell Island, a bird which I have never seen on the Solomons."

In an article in 'Man' (vol. vii. no. 3), on the natives of Rennell, Mr. Woodford says the island is perhaps "as little known as any in the Western Pacific." Here, then, is a fine opportunity for some enterprising Member of the B.O.U. to distinguish himself.—P. L. S.

The Ptarmigan of Franz-Josef Land.—Mr. H. J. Pearson, in his letter published in this Journal last year ('Ibis,' 1907, p. 509), has shown that a species of Ptarmigan (*Lagopus hyperboreus*) was found in Alger Island, Franz-Josef Land, by the members of the Ziegler Expedition.

* See 'Ibis,' 1907, p. 501.

A careful perusal of Mr. Fiala's recently published history of the Ziegler-Fiala Expedition ('Fighting the Polar Ice') proves that the Ptarmigan occurs in other islands of the Franz-Josef Archipelago besides Ziegler Island, which is one of the most southern of the group. The main point of interest, however, is that it is found even in Rudoif Island, the farthest north island of the whole Archipelago ($81^{\circ} 40'$ N. L.), where some of the members of the expedition feasted on a "Ptarmigan fricassée" on Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24th). "Four of these birds had been shot at camp during the previous summer and saved for this special occasion" (*op. cit.* p. 154). It is evident that the Ptarmigan must have crossed over the whole of the Franz-Josef Archipelago on their route from Spitsbergen to Rudolf Island.

A new Bird for Egypt.—We receive frequent letters from Mr. M. J. Nicoll, of the Gizeh Zoological Gardens. He is still engaged in adding to his collection of birds, when he can find time. The most recent novelty obtained is a specimen of the *Saxicola melanura* of Rüppell, which, though well known in Abyssinia and Southern Arabia, has not previously been recorded from Egypt. A good figure of the species has already appeared in this journal (see 'Ibis,' 1896, pl. i. fig. 2, p. 13), but whether the representative form found in Palestine (*S. yerburi* Sharpe), which is figured on the same plate, is distinct, we are a little doubtful. It may, perhaps, be maintained as a "subspecies."

Rare Birds observed at Fair Isle.—In the number of the 'Annals of Scottish Natural History' for October last (p. 246) Mr. Eagle Clarke gives the following account of his recent visit to Fair Isle:—"I have just returned from a five weeks' residence on Fair Isle, where, in the course of my investigations, I witnessed the passage-movements of no less than 82 species of migratory birds. Among the species observed were several of special interest (some of them being new to Scotland), and these I propose to mention in this

preliminary note, reserving full particulars for a future contribution on the results of the year's observations. The rarer birds that came under my notice during September and the early days of October were: the Black-throated Chat (*Saxicola occidentalis*), Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*), Grey-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla viridis*), Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa parva*), Greater Redpoll (*Acanthis rostrata*), Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), Lapland Bunting (*Calcurius lapponicus*), and the Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)."

'*British Birds*'*.—Most of our readers, we suspect, are already familiar with 'British Birds,' but nevertheless the successful start of a new periodical devoted to Ornithology is an event which cannot be passed over in the columns of 'The Ibis.' The first number of 'British Birds' was issued in June last, and it has continued to appear with unfailing regularity on the 1st of each month ever since. The Editor and the Assistant-Editor are well known to all of us, and there can be little question as to their competency for the task before them. We need say no more upon that point. But the question is whether they can secure an unfailing supply of good material in the short interval between the numbers. This remains to be proved, but for the present they seem to have received the support of many of the best-known names in British ornithology. The late Howard Saunders was a contributor to the first number; in other numbers we observe the names of Mr. Walter Rothschild, Mr. F. C. Selous, Mr. F. W. Headley, and Mr. N. C. Ticehurst, all well-known authorities on the 'British List,' so there can be no doubt that up to the present the Editors have adequate assistance, and we trust they will continue to obtain it.

The illustrations are a good feature in 'British Birds,'

* 'British Birds, an Illustrated Magazine devoted to the Birds on the British List.' Edited by H. E. Witherby, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., assisted by W. P. Pycraft, A.L.S., M.B.O.U. Nos. 1-7. June-December, 1907. London: Witherby & Co.

they are mostly taken from photographs, as is the fashion of the day. Mr. Selous's picture of the White-tailed Eagle's nest (p. 77) may be specially commended, as also Miss E. L. Turner's successful photograph of the young of the Great Crested Grebe (p. 104). Moreover, in the second number will be found a most excellent portrait of Alfred Newton, and in the seventh number an almost equally good one of Howard Saunders. We think that we have now said sufficient to call the attention of such of our readers as are not already acquainted with it to this newest addition to the list of ornithological periodicals.

Mr. Boyd Alexander.—Since his return to England in February last, Mr. Alexander's time has been fully occupied with the preparation of the two excellently written and fully illustrated volumes ('From the Niger to the Nile') that contain the narrative of his famous expedition. After a short rest, he is now devoting himself to the examination and description of the 2500 birds collected during his transit of the African continent. We are much pleased to be able to announce that the results of his work on this branch of the Ethiopian Fauna will be published in 'The Ibis,' in two parts. The first part of "The Birds of the Alexander-Gosling Expedition" will relate to the birds of Nigeria and Lake Chad, the second to the species met with in the Congo State.

Mr. S. A. Neave's New Expedition.—Mr. S. A. Neave, whose interesting paper on the birds of North-eastern Rhodesia (collected by him as Naturalist to the Geodetic Survey) we have just noticed (above, p. 185), is now again in the same country, busily engaged in supplementing the collections made on his former visit. Mr. Neave has gone out as Assistant to his father, Dr. Sheffield Neave, who is the Chief Officer of the "Sleeping-Sickness Commission" sent into the Katanga district for the purpose of studying this fatal form of disease. The party, we are told, landed at

Lobita Bay in Benguela, and proceeded up the projected line of railway into the copper district of the Congo Free State. Mr. Neave's last letters (15. 9. 07) were dated at Kambove in Katanga, but he is now on his way to Fort Jameson in N.E. Rhodesia. He has already sent home about 450 bird-skins.

Mr. Seth-Smith's Mission to Australia.—Mr. David Seth-Smith, M.B.O.U., left London on Dec. 15th last for Australia. In consequence of the importance attached to the exhibition of Australian animals proposed to be held in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London in July next, Mr. Seth-Smith has been requested by the Council of the Society (of which he is himself a member) to go out to Australia and superintend the packing and conveyance to London of important collections of animals presented to the Society by the Gardens of Australia and New Zealand. This he has consented to do. As Mr. Seth-Smith is the owner of a fine collection of living birds, and is, besides, Editor of the 'Avicultural Magazine,' it is obvious that this important mission could not have been placed in better hands.

Yarrell's 'British Birds' and Saunders' 'Manual.'—At the last meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club (held on December 18th) it was announced from the Chair that shortly before his death the late Mr. Howard Saunders had expressed a wish that Mr. William Eagle Clarke, of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, should be his successor in the Editorship of any new editions of Yarrell's 'British Birds' and Saunders' 'Illustrated Manual of British Birds' that might be required. It was added that all documents and papers relating to this subject had been transferred by Mr. Saunders' executors to the custody of Mr. Eagle Clarke, who had accepted the task offered to him by his late friend.